

look forward to being with you and sharing our experience with the American people.

NOTE: The address was videotaped at approximately 2:30 p.m. on March 5 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for later broadcast on the U.S. Information Agency WORLDNET, and it was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 19. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this address.

Statement on the Agreement on Taxes on the Internet

March 19, 1998

In my recent speech on the future of the Internet, I called for a short-term moratorium on new and discriminatory taxes that would slow down the growth of the Internet and a search for long-term solutions to the tax issues raised by electronic commerce. We cannot allow 30,000 State and local tax jurisdictions to stifle the Internet, but neither can we allow the erosion of the revenue that State and local governments need to fight crime and invest in education.

I believe that the agreement reached by groups representing State and local elected officials is an important and constructive step toward a long-term solution. I particularly want to thank Governors Leavitt and Romer for their bipartisan leadership on this important issue. I look forward to working with all parties with a stake in this issue to enact legislation this year.

NOTE: In the statement, the President referred to Gov. Michael O. Leavitt of Utah and Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado.

Statement on Proposed Legislation To Raise the Minimum Wage

March 19, 1998

Two years ago, we raised the minimum wage to reward work and help millions of Americans raise their families with dignity. With our expanded earned-income tax credit and the higher minimum wage, we said to hard-pressed working families: If you work full-time, you should not have to raise your children in poverty. Without another minimum wage increase, too many of these fami-

lies will fall through the cracks and back below the poverty line. That is wrong.

That is why I am pleased that Senator Daschle, Senator Kennedy, Representative Gephardt, and Representative Bonior are introducing legislation that includes another sound and prudent minimum wage increase. With our economy the healthiest in a generation and job growth strong, we can afford to increase the minimum wage by a dollar by the turn of the century. I strongly support raising the minimum wage. This legislation will help ensure that we pay people a decent wage and that parents who work hard and play by the rules can lift their children and themselves out of poverty. It's right for America and right for America's workers.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Proposed "National and Community Service Amendments Act of 1998"

March 19, 1998

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit for your immediate consideration and enactment the "National and Community Service Amendments Act of 1998." This legislative proposal extends and amends national service law, including the National and Community Service Act of 1990 and the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973. It builds upon the long, bipartisan tradition of service in our country, which was renewed in 1993 when I signed the National and Community Service Trust Act creating the Corporation for National Service.

Service to one's community is an integral part of what it means to be an American. The Presidents' Summit for America's Future held in Philadelphia last April reinforced the role of programs supported by the Corporation for National Service as key vehicles to provide young people with the resources to maximize their potential and give back to their communities. Citizen service is also at the heart of our efforts to prepare America for the 21st century, as we work to ensure that all Americans have the opportunity to make the most of their own lives and to help those in need.

My Administration's most important contribution to citizen service is AmeriCorps, the national service program that already has given more than 100,000 young Americans the opportunity to serve their country. By tying opportunity to responsibility, we have given them the chance to serve and, in return, earn money for post-secondary education. In community after community, AmeriCorps members have proven that service can help us meet our most pressing social needs. For example, in Simpson County, Kentucky, AmeriCorps members helped second graders jump three grade levels in reading. In Boys and Girls Clubs, AmeriCorps members are mentors for at-risk young people. Habitat For Humanity relies upon AmeriCorps members to recruit more volunteers and build more houses. In communities beset by floods, tornadoes, and hurricanes, AmeriCorps members have helped to rebuild lives and restore hope. AmeriCorps members are helping to mobilize thousands of college students from more than 800 college campuses in our America Reads program. In all of these efforts, AmeriCorps brings together people of every background to work toward common goals.

Independent evaluators have reviewed AmeriCorps, National Senior Service Corps programs, and Learn and Service America programs and have concluded that national service yields a positive return on investment. The proposed legislation that I am transmitting builds on our experiences with national service to date and improves national service programs in four ways: (1) by codifying agreements with the Congress and others to reduce costs and streamline national service; (2) strengthening partnerships with traditional volunteer organizations; (3) increasing States' flexibility to administer national service programs; and (4) expanding opportunities for Americans to serve.

Since the enactment of the National and Community Service Trust Act in 1993, and particularly since 1995, my Administration has worked with constructive critics of national service to address their concerns and improve the overall program. This proposed legislation continues that process by reducing the Corporation's average budgeted cost per AmeriCorps member, repealing authority for

redundant or obsolete national service programs, and making other improvements in the efficiency of national service programs.

National service has never been a substitute for the contributions made by the millions of Americans who volunteer their time to worthy causes every year. Rather, as leaders of volunteer organizations have often expressed, national service has proven that the presence of full-time, trained service participants enhances tremendously the effectiveness of volunteers. This proposed legislation will strengthen the partnership between the national service programs and traditional volunteer organizations; codify the National Service Scholarship program honoring exemplary service by high school students; and expand the AmeriCorps Challenge Scholarships, through which national service participants can access education awards. It also will authorize appropriations for the Points of Light Foundation through the year 2002.

The National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 explicitly conceived of national service as a Federal-State partnership. The Act vested significant authority in bipartisan State Commissions appointed by the Governors. I promised that we would accelerate the process of devolution as the newly created State Commissions expanded their capacities. This proposed legislation fulfills that promise in a variety of ways, including providing authority for the Corporation for National Service to enter into Service Collaboration Agreements with Governors to provide a means for coordinating the planning and administration of national service programs in a State.

This proposed legislation will also provide additional service opportunities. By reducing the cost per AmeriCorps member, it will enable more people to serve; it will broaden the age and income guidelines for National Senior Service Corps participants, expanding the pool of older Americans who can perform results-oriented service in their communities; and it will simplify the administration of Learn and Serve America, so States and communities will more easily be able to provide opportunities for students to learn through service in their schools and neighborhoods.

This past January, I had the opportunity to honor the memory of Dr. Martin Luther

King, Jr., by engaging in service on the holiday commemorating his birth. I joined 65 AmeriCorps members and more than 300 community volunteers in repairing and repainting Cardozo High School in the Shaw neighborhood of Washington, D.C. Thirty-one years ago, Dr. King came to that very neighborhood and urged the people there to engage in citizen service to rebuild their lives, their community, and their future. That is what those national service participants, and the thousands more who were participating in similar projects across the country, were doing—honoring the legacy of Dr. King and answering the high calling of citizenship in this country.

Each of the more than 500,000 participants in the programs of the National Senior Service Corps and the 750,000 participants in programs supported by Learn and Serve America, and every AmeriCorps member answers that high calling of citizenship when they make and fulfill a commitment to service in their communities. This proposed legislation builds on the successes of these programs and improves them for the future.

I urge the Congress to give this proposed legislation prompt and favorable consideration.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
March 19, 1998.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Dinner

March 19, 1998

Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to begin by thanking all of you, not only for your warm welcome in this magnificent Women's Museum, which I always love to visit and which is a real treasure of our National Capital, but for being here to support the Senators who are here and those whom we hope to add to their ranks.

I thank Senator Torricelli not only for his friendship and his kind words but for his fighting spirit. He has the heart of a lion. And when others feel weak, he feels stronger, and we are stronger because of what Bob Torricelli has done. And I thank him.

I thank Senator Kerrey, my longtime friend. We used to be Governors together, and we used to lament the condition of our country in the eighties, and the escalating deficits and what we saw as the irresponsibility of decisionmaking here. Bob Kerrey did cast the deciding vote on that budget bill, and I thank him for that. But in a real sense, so did all the other Democrats, because we didn't have a single Republican vote. And Al Gore even had to vote. And as he says, "Whenever I vote, we win." [Laughter]

But imagine how different the last 6 years would have been—5 years and 3 months—if we hadn't done that. And I want to thank Senator Kerrey for being willing to do this job for 2 years. It's not easy. It's easy to give the speeches. You know, he just asked me to show up every now and then at these events and smile and take a few pictures, see people I enjoy visiting with anyway, and give a talk. But he's had to go across the country and do all the work and see all of you and ask you to help. And it's often a thankless task. And when he took it, it was certainly a thankless task because we were down and our numbers were depleted. But he took it on, and I predict a stunning and historically unpredicted result in November of 1998. And you will have a lot to do with it, Senator Kerrey. We thank you very much.

Finally, I want to say that it would be impossible for me to do my job if it weren't for Tom Daschle. He is a magnificent leader of our Democrats in the Senate. Yes, let's stand up for him. [Applause]

I want to talk very briefly about what I believe to be at stake. First, just a little picture on the past. It is wonderful to stand up and say that these are good times for America, that we have the lowest unemployment rate in 24 years and the lowest crime rate in 24 years and the smallest welfare population in 27 years and the lowest inflation in 30 years and the highest homeownership in history. That's wonderful to say. But we forget how hard it was to do.

Before the Balanced Budget Act ever saved a dollar, the deficit had been reduced by 92 percent because of the votes solely of Democratic Members of Congress in 1993. The crime rate is down in part because we moved beyond the hot rhetoric of tough talk